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## FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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DESP. NO.

FROM : Amembassy BONN

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

March 16, 1961

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SUBJECT: General Heusinger's Views on NATO Military Strategy.

There is attached an unofficial translation of a portion of an interview which General Adolf Heusinger, the new Chairman of NATO's Standing Military Committee in Washington, granted Dr. Hans Lehmann of the Bundeswehr paper "Visier," which was published some weeks earlier, and reprinted in part in the Government Bulletin for March 3, 1961. According to Der Spiegel for March 15, 1961, Defense Minister Strauss arranged for the second publication of this interview without informing General Heusinger of his intention to do so because he considered it provided a useful exposition of the German position on reported American intentions to revise the basis of Western military strategy in Europe. Heusinger was reported as having complained indignantly to his colleagues after he saw the republished article which according to Der Spiegel identified him as propagandist for a rigid atomic strategy and would make his future NATO work more difficult.

In the interview, General Heusinger strongly opposes the idea of any shift in Western military strategy whose effect would be to build up conventional forces in front-line defense areas and to hold the nuclear deterrent in reserve. The General argues that a potential aggressor must be convinced from the outset of Western readiness to employ nuclear weapons for its defense so as not to be misled into attempting a limited aggression which could bring worthwhile initial gains if the West did not reply with tactical nuclear weapons. He goes so far as to state explicitly, "The only reason for the all-out effort to equip NATO with atomic weapons is to make the other side realize that it will face destruction if it attacks."

General Heusinger also utilized this occasion to express himself on the present state of development in the Bundeswehr, which he describes as going according to plans in a satisfactory fashion.

Another statement by General Heusinger appeared in the weekly bulletin issued by the Press and Information Office of the German Federal Government on March 14, an English language publication. It is entitled "Europe's New Responsibilities," and a copy is attached for the Department's information.

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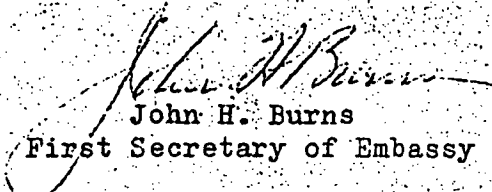
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UNCLASSIFIED


Page No. 2 of  
Despatch No. 1367  
March 16, 1961.

Once again Heusinger expresses himself on current military planning and emphasizes categorically that: "We cannot today, as in times past, differentiate between conventional shield forces and nuclear sword forces, but at the Iron Curtain must give the shield forces a nuclear deterrent power." He also points out the importance of developing and strengthening the power of the European allies and indicates that NATO's task in the coming months will be to find "the right form in which to do this."

For the Ambassador:

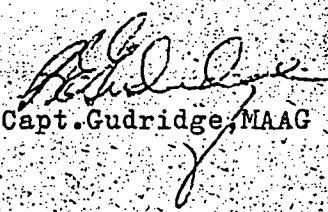
  
John H. Burns

First Secretary of Embassy

  
Enclosures: (2)

Unofficial translation of portion  
of interview.

Statement by General Heusinger.

  
Coord: Capt. Gudridge, MAAG

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Page No. 1 of  
Enclosure No. 1  
Despatch No. 1367  
Amembassy BONN

Translation of part of an interview which General Adolf Heusinger, the newly appointed Chairman of NATO's Standing Military Committee in Washington, granted Dr. Hans Lehmann of the new Bundeswehr paper "Visier," and which was reprinted in part in the Government Bulletin for March 3, 1961:

(After General Heusinger had answered two questions regarding his new position in Washington, Dr. Lehmann posed the following question:)

Question: Now, in view of this distribution of tasks, and in view of the Polaris strategy with Polaris rockets, atomic submarines and similar things: is the formula of the so-called shield and sword forces still valid today?

Answer: Originally, we had the shield forces in the foremost line of defense and behind them the sword forces in the form of the American strategic nuclear weapons, reinforced by their British equivalents. Now, in the last years, an equilibrium as regards strategic nuclear weapons has gradually developed between West and East. Each of the two great opponents knows that the use of strategic nuclear weapons means a deadly danger for both sides. Therefore the deterrent effect of these strategic nuclear weapons has changed. Every country will hesitate a great deal about using them. That is a good thing. However, under all circumstances we must also maintain a deterrent effect in the field of the so-called shield forces. This is a point in which we here in Germany are particularly interested. We must realize quite clearly that the defense of Europe depends upon the defense of the Federal Republic. If the Federal Republic were lost, if the armored forces of the aggressor were to reach the Rhine or even to advance beyond the Rhine, Europe probably could no longer be held. From this follows the imperative to defend the Federal Republic as far east as possible, if possible at the Iron Curtain, in order to make it possible in this way to defend Europe.

Question: In other words, the thesis which was formerly advocated in some quarters, that it sufficed to pull some kind of a trip-wire along the border so that in the beginning the attacker would advance into a vacuum and would thus have a chance to think things over once again, this thesis would be exceedingly dangerous?

Answer: This thesis is dangerous above all because it will cause the opponent to think he could secure decisive initial gains. It actually forces the defender to use nuclear weapons because he must by all means prevent the opponent from securing such gains. Therefore Western defense must be so organized that the opponent, from the very beginning and at all times, is aware of Western readiness also to use nuclear weapons for its defense, and realizes he will not easily secure initial gains.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Page No. 2 of  
Enclosure No. 1  
Despatch No. 1367  
Ambassy BONN

Question: In other words, the attacker is to be made to realize that he faces destruction if he risks aggression?

Answer: That's right. With this formulation you broached the fundamental concept of the entire defense strategy of NATO. The only aim of this defense strategy is to prevent war. The only reason for the all-out effort to equip NATO with atomic weapons is to make the other side realize that it will face destruction if it attacks.

Question: Do you mean to say that the shield forces of the foremost line of defense must also be equipped with tactical atomic weapons?

Answer: Yes. We know that the opponent does have the corresponding tactical atomic weapons. In the course of history it has always been a difficult situation when a country was no military match for another country with aggressive tendencies. This situation has frequently led to an attack against such a country. The existence of an equilibrium of forces or of an approximate equilibrium of forces usually forces both sides to be cautious. What I hope is that the development of atomic weapons, of weapons unheard of in the history of mankind, of weapons whose effectiveness cannot be exaggerated, will lead to the realization that an attack against another country will probably mean suicide.

Question: Yes, since the existence of NATO, the Soviets have not risked general war.

Answer: Since they do not now risk of general war the Soviets seek to gain ground through small-scale local infiltration or local operations, in a step-by-step fashion.

Question: From the TASS declaration of December 6 on the November Moscow Conference of the 81 communist parties it appears that Khrushchev and the spokesmen of his major group have realized that war would be an exceedingly dangerous undertaking at this time. Is it correct to say that they are now following a more indirect course?

Answer: I am convinced that Soviet policy is presently not interested in a third world war. I think that the Soviets are presently seeking to make progress by different means. Look at what is happening in Cuba, Africa, or Asia. From their point of view it would be foolish to risk all they have gained so far through a third world war. But, of course, they never lose sight of their aim of achieving world domination.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Page No. 3 of  
closure No. 1  
Despatch No. 1367  
Amembassy BONN

Question: In other words, it should be the major task of NATO to make clear to the Soviets that their long-term goal of forcing the West to give in, again and again, directly or indirectly, by exercising pressure with the Red Army or by other methods, that this goal is a vain hope and cannot be realized?

Answer: What appears to be particularly necessary to this end is (1) to make every effort to maintain Western defense and its deterrent effect; the Soviets must never believe that there is any slackening of our efforts in this direction; (2) to maintain and expand the economic potential of the West, and (3), and (this is a very essential factor), to strengthen the West's defense readiness ideologically.

Question: You are now about to leave your present work in Bonn. At this point the question poses itself: where are we with respect to the establishment of the Bundeswehr?

Answer: In changing over to my new work, I find it hard to leave the Bundeswehr. I have been in this job for ten years; it has been my task to direct militarily the preparations for the establishment of the Bundeswehr and then, for the past five years, this establishment itself. You will understand that it is not easy to leave a job which is not yet quite complete. On the other hand, it may be said that the remaining job will be done according to plan, on the basis of what the Bundeswehr presently is. The difficulties which still exist are much less than those which have already been overcome. Such difficulties exist primarily in the personnel field. By and large, however, I may hand over my work to my successor with an easy conscience.

Question: Of course, an army is never completely ready. Nevertheless, approximately how many years will it still take according to plans to bring the Bundeswehr up to the point you wish it to be?

Answer: You are entirely right when you say that an army is never "ready," and this is particularly true for a modern army. Again and again, new problems of armament and equipment arise. By and large, however, we shall have reached our goal by the end of 1963.

Question: In the beginning the Bundeswehr encountered certain psychological difficulties, especially with young people. Do these difficulties still exist, or is a new generation growing up now?

Answer: Originally we expected these difficulties to be greater than they actually were. I need only remind you of the fact that for instance the number of conscientious objectors was much smaller than had been expected in 1956. It is true that the youth of the Federal Republic does not approach matters with hurrah-patriotism, with great enthusiasm. However, it submits to military training out of a really

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Page No. 4 of  
Enclosure No. 1  
Despatch No. 1367  
Amembassy BONN

serious feeling of responsibility. I think that the psychological difficulties we had to overcome from 1951 till 1955, but also up into 1958, have essentially been mastered. Today's youth is different. It is sober, realistic, and wants to know why it is supposed to do a certain thing. I think that this youth, once convinced of the necessity of something, and knowing the reason for it, is just as willing to do its share today as was the youth of former times, provided it is properly led and directed. To lead youth has become a general problem of our time. Who is accepted by youth? How can progress be made with youth? With the experience I have gained I can only say that this is a question of personality; there are no laws in this field, no firm rules. One man can do it, and the other one can't. Also, this has nothing to do with age. There are older people who find excellent contact with youth in no time, and on the other hand there are younger ones who find it harder to be accepted by youth. Authority will grow by itself if youth accepts its superiors not because of their insignia of rank but because of the example they provide.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Page No. 1 of  
Enclosure No. 2 of  
Despatch No. 1367  
Amembassy, BONN

Europe's New Responsibilities

By General Adolf Heusinger, Chairman-Elect of NATO's Military  
Committee in Permanent Session

In the second half of the 20th century—which in the military sphere is characterized by the development of terrible weapons of destruction—war has stopped being a usable instrument of politics. This is the fundamental thought that should motivate all endeavour in the field of security policy—that is, such endeavour must seek ways of preventing war without sacrificing freedom.

Military planning, as part of this endeavour, must take into account the following facts:

The Soviet bloc has at its disposal a mighty military potential; the Soviet Union alone maintains 165 divisions, of which 130 are at full strength in manpower and equipment.

The Soviet missile arm has grown into a powerful instrument of political leadership, commanding as it does an imposing arsenal of long-range weapons of various types.

This military apparatus is in the hands of leaders who have made world conquest their aim and who publicly boast of this aim.

"Deterrence Is Defense"

Under these circumstances, securing the peace is possible only by making the potential aggressor realize very clearly that aggression would involve a fatal risk to himself. The defender, who wishes not to go to war but to prevent war, must therefore deter the aggressor from starting war. Thus deterrence becomes the modern form of defense.

The concepts that prevail in NATO --resolved and confirmed by fifteen allied nations-- are based on these requirements, and have been adjusted to every change in the technical aspects of the military situation. Such adjustment will have to continue if NATO is to fulfill its task of preserving peace. The following are the underlying considerations:

1. Armament is necessary in order to assure the West of a stable position in permanent disarmament talks with the East. Thus the following principle applies: Let us arm in order to deter the opponent; let us negotiate in order not to go to war.

2. The deterrence of the opponent must be so varied that it remains effective in the face of all possible means of aggression; we cannot today, as in times past, differentiate between conventional shield forces and nuclear sword forces, but at the Iron Curtain must give the shield forces a nuclear deterrent power.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

Page No. 2 of  
Enclosure No. 2  
Despatch No. 1367  
Amembassy BONN

3. This conclusion results from the recognition that, in our time, conventional weapons alone are no longer deterrent.

In addition, the planning of military policy has to take into account this factor: Through the development of intercontinental rockets, the United States, the leading Western world power, has become directly exposed to the threat of war from the East. Thus the defense of the United States no longer takes place only in Europe but also on its own shores. This means additional burdens, both moral and material.

It follows that Europe must take over a greater share of responsibility. In close and inseparable cooperation with the United States, and under its leadership, Europe must develop and strengthen its own power in order to provide protection for the United States, just as America provides a security guarantee for Europe. To find the right form in which to do this will be NATO's task in the coming months.

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